1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

Lau Islands, Fiji

By

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INTRODUCTION

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

This book is the outcome of a sojourn of four years in the Fiji Islands. Most of the time was spent in Lakemba, the chief island of Lau, as headmaster of a native school; the remainder, in exploring the whole group, with the generous assistance of Exeter College and Jesus College, Oxford.

I made it my aim to record verbatim all the information I acquired from the natives, using a kind of telegraphic Fijian, mixed with English when only the meaning and not the exact word was caught. This was a most difficult task for one who had only recently acquired a knowledge of the language. It has been necessary, of course, to condense some of this desultory conversation, but on the whole, the book represents the stringing together of native accounts regarding customs and traditions, and descriptions of what I have seen. The original manuscript, however, is preserved by me.

I must express my indebtedness to the Director of Bernice P. Bishop Museum and to his assistants, who in order to render the work intelligible to those unfamiliar with Fijian idioms, have done much arduous work which I could hardly have found the time to do.

By the Lauans, history is strictly distinguished from tales. Tales begin with the announcement *tukuni*—and proceed with *tikotiko* (there was). The narrator aims at making his tale interesting and amusing. History, known as "stories of ancient days," is told informally, but with great care for accuracy. Small inaccuracies are severely criticized behind a man's back.

The Lands Enquiry introduced an unfortunate bias into early history, various parties trying to make out that they had once ruled the land or had reduced the former rulers to complète subjection. Controversies are rendered easy by the fact that history is not remembered as one consecutive story; to Fijians, it consists of detached episodes that strike the imagination. From Niumataiwalu (p. 241) on it is possible to place many of

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Lingandua had told Tuiliku to get three *kura* fruits in Tuvana; he now said, "We shall be here three nights: the first day eat one *kura* fruit, the second eat another, and on the third day eat the third. Eat no Mburotu food, lest you die." At the end of three nights Lingandua told him they should go back to Tuvana. He took one coir coconut, one dwarf coconut, one red *Dracaena*, one king coconut, one red *sovisovi* plant: all these plants are now found in Tuvana. When they arrived in Tuvana the coconuts they planted there remained. Lingandua said, "I am going; go you to Ono. Don't go and tell of our journey; the day you tell you will find yourself in Mburotu." After a long time Tuiliku thought he would tell. He told his household to bring bark-cloth and mats and had them spread out. He then told them his journey to Mburotu. When the story was ended he died. So there were coconuts in Tuvana and from there they were brought to Ono.

The story of Tuiliku will be found in the Native Gazette (11, p. 164, 1894; p. 151, 1909).

NAIAU ISLAND

Many stories are told about the people of Naiau showing them to be simpletons (*uthe*). Foolishness seizes them at low tide. They fished in the woods; drove lizards, snakes, cockroaches into a cave which they then closed; they took spears, removed the stone, and speared the animals as they appeared: they saw water at the foot of a cliff and did not know what it was, so the men went to adorn themselves and came forward to leap. The people sang:

Ra tukutuku ndonga (bis);	They are making dye;
Ra ndrendre koto (bis);	They laugh as they lie;
Nda rika, nda rika.	Let us jump, let us jump.

Then one of the men jumped over the edge of the cliff and fell lying on his back, and exposing his teeth as he died; those above thought he was laughing. His whole body was red with blood which they took for dye. They did not know death; their minds were gone astray.

The descendants of Langone were granted by Taliai Tupou the privilege of eating turtle, because Langone warned Taliai that Ndranivia and his people were plotting to murder him. Langone was a descendant of Nggomo, who went to stay in Naiau. There was in Narothivo a chief called Tui Naiau; Nggomo wanted to transfer the title to Ndevo, but before he could do so he was killed. He had a wife in Lakemba of the Tumbou clan, who bore a son, Ndelailoa. The son conquered Naiau.

At Liku was a god called Sambasamba or Mami, a shark. His dwelling was in the shark cave on a promontory. Wanting to go sightseeing in Mbau, he embarked in the shape of a man. The Levuka people took him on board. They arrived in Mbau. The fishermen of Vutia near Rewa came to Mbau. He wanted to go with them to Rewa. He spent the night on shore; after dinner he said, "I want two boys to take me to the place where lives Tui Ndreketi's fisherman." Tui Ndreketi's fisherman was a big *ndambea* fish. "Why do you wish to go," they asked.

"Sightseeing," he said.

So two boys rowed him, one at the bow and one at the stern; Sambasamba sat in the middle. They rowed him to the place where the *ndambea* lived. Sambasamba put one leg into the water and it changed into a fin, then the other changed into a fin. He gave the boys some bark cloth called *tongo* as a return for their work. By that time his body had turned into a shark's up to the neck. He said, "You watch; when I fight the *ndambea*, if you see black blood it is the Westerner's blood; if it is red blood

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823 on their side of the island, but the people of Ndaku bring them palolo in exchange for which the people of Nggalivanua have to give much. To prevent palolo being brought they hit the stone and a heavy sea ensues. There is also a heavy sea if a man of Raviravi walks on that beach, for they hate Raviravi people. One clan of landspeople in Levukaindaku are the gods (*tu*) or priests (*mbete*) of the stones: they cut leaves of any kind and lay them on the stones. In Christian times these stones were objected to so strongly that the people took them out to sea in two canoes and dumped them overboard, and returned to the land, but a big sea came which carried the stones back to their place and dashed the canoes to pieces on them.

776 There is a story of a *tevoro*, half man half spirit, who came over from Kandavu sailing in a pot. He set up his pot as a house on a hill and proceeded to eat up the inhabitants. His teeth were tied with a string to strengthen them. He was torn to pieces by the dog of a boy called Lasawalevu whom he tried to eat.

823 There is a place called Navatuloa which is also known as Matukundua (Matuku-once), because if a foreigner sets foot there he will go home and die. The people of old did not practice witchcraft; they simply took remnants of food and put them in Navatuloa.

ANIMAL TALES

538 There are a number of animal tales. They are referred to as "the Animal Tribe" (*ko ira a yavusa manumanu*). In these tales the names of the animals always appear with the polite prefix *ra* (sir), as Ra Vonu, "Sir Turtle."

The tale of Sir Turtle and Sir Monitor (*vokai*) is well known all over Fiji:

539 There was a turtle and a monitor. This animal, the monitor, and this fish, the turtle, have different homes: the home of the turtle is in the sea; the monitor's home is the dry land. One day the monitor was going down to the beach as the turtle was coming ashore. They met in a very nice spot. They had no sooner met when they both together saw a conch. When they saw this conch they agreed to walk as far as the place where lay the conch. As they were walking they talked together and each related the nature of his country. As they were discoursing, their discourse took a bad turn owing to some words used by the turtle to the monitor, saying, "You hill people, you are always eating vegetables; we sea-folk, we eat shell-fish, eat sea-weed and fish." Thereat the monitor was angry and proposed they should have a tug-of-war with the conch; he that got it, at the time of his death the conch should be blown that people might know Sir Turtle or Sir Monitor is dead. The turtle agreed. In tugging Sir Monitor clutched the lip of the conch with his claws, making those black stripes that are still to be seen. Sir Turtle inserted his penis deep on the other side which, since then, is streaked like a turtle's penis. Sir Turtle won. So the turtle carried off the conch to sea, and that is why the conch is blown when Sir Turtle dies.

Sir Rat and Sir Bat: Sir Rat had wings while Sir Bat went about with a staff. One day Sir Bat managed to steal Sir Rat's wings; Sir Rat seized the staff, which is now his tail.

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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575 jump, dance, and club one another. While in this state they receive mana in the form of inspiration from their guardians.

Each member is a specialist in some skill and has a guardian of his own whose name he bears. A creator of a new dance form receives them from the god of the dance (*meke*); a medicine man receives new medicines from the god of medicine. The membership of the cult is controlled by a god [776 named Rayawa. When propitiated with kava, Rayawa reveals the names of 782] new members. The man who discovers new members for the cult has Rayawa for his god.

The leader of the cult on each island is called the originator of the bamboo (*vunindavu*), for, as the oldest bamboo is surrounded by many shoots, so the leader is surrounded by many members. He has the strongest guardian and the most mana. Every new member must make a ceremonial offering of kava to the leader. If the leader is challenged, a contest is arranged during the Luve ni Wai rites and the member who is least vulnerable, and therefore has the most powerful god, wins and takes the leadership.

[782] Native informants say that a Luve ni Wai member occasionally propitiates his guardian by leaving a bowl of kava in the bush. When he returns, not the next day perhaps but certainly after a few days, the kava has disappeared from the bowl.

575 Informants say that in olden days Luve ni Wai members had their own
195 idiom which could not be understood by the people. These old ***meke*** (chants)
● 538 are difficult to translate, but, when one examines them one sees that poetic license and figures of speech rather than actual vocabulary differences set them apart from modern *meke*. However, many words which appear in the old *meke* cannot be translated by the natives today. The old Luve ni Wai *meke* are lyric poetry, highly subjective, in contrast to the more recent ones, which are definitely realistic.

575 The following *meke*, which are not understood by present natives, are
539 said to be in Luve ni Wai idiom:

Nai wau (club dance) chanted by Tatchini of Kambara

(Drum beats—small *lali ni meke* type)

Na vatu manawa, na vua i rama	The floating stones, the fruits of light
Yau talatala, vakaselotaki mana wangga	The murmuring breeze, welcoming the wonderful canoes
Tambu wangga ko ira na kai Mathuata,	Chiefly canoes, they are the people of Mathuata,
Laki kele sara i matamatana.	About to anchor at the mouth of the passage.

(Drum beats)